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Clark, Floyd County motorists get free chance to seal up gasoline emissions

Clark and Floyd County motorists can now get new – and free – gas caps as their turns come for inspection at the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM) Clean Air Car Check stations.

Gas caps that don't seal properly—or are missing altogether—allow volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to escape from gasoline tanks. These VOCs are a component of ground level ozone pollution, or "smog." Ozone is unhealthy for anyone to breathe, especially for people with respiratory problems. Because of elevated levels of ozone in the Southern Indiana region, motorists have been required by the federal Clean Air Act to have the emissions of their vehicles tested to make sure their systems are working efficiently.

"Motorists in Clark and Floyd counties have been doing a great deal to reduce pollution in their region through this program, and we are delighted to help them meet the clean air standards," said IDEM Commissioner Lori F. Kaplan. "In addition to giving free gas caps to those who need them, we're making the emissions test easier by giving them the solution to their problems on the spot and not requiring them to return for yet another inspection."

The caps being provided should fit 90 percent of the cars coming through the lanes, Kaplan said. The cap exchanges will precede the regular full emissions inspection required of the vehicles.

The Clean Air Car Check is one of Indiana's most effective programs for reducing VOC emissions from mobile sources. Air pollutants from cars and light duty trucks are major contributors to ozone. Routine inspections help in finding the cars with faulty gas caps or emissions systems that need repair.

The Clean Air Car Check program is offered in two regions of the state -- Southern Indiana and Northwest Indiana. Since beginning the program in Clark and Floyd Counties in 1984, IDEM has worked hard to respond to citizen concerns and make the testing as convenient as possible. Convenience factors include exempting the four newest model year cars, faster On-Board Diagnostic inspections for model year vehicles 1996 and newer, and a toll-free hotline (1-888-240-1684) to answer motorists' questions and check current wait times. Individuals who are considering buying a used car in the area can phone the hotline to check a vehicle's test history.

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